

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 L-03 H-02

PA-02 PRS-01 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 ACDA-10

IGA-02 AID-05 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /069 W

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R 190556Z FEB 76

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8698

INFO USIA WASHDC

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

13 AF CC

COMUSMACTHAI BANGKOK TH

13 AF CV UTAPAO

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 BANGKOK 3729

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MPOL, MARR, MILI, TH

SUBJ: PRESS REPORT: U.S. MILITARY REDUCTIONS IN THAILAND

USIA PASS IEA

1. DAILY ENGLISH- LANGUAGE THE NATION FRONTPAGED FOLLOWING ARTICLE
TODAY:

2. BEGIN TEXT. THAILAND HAS PROPOSED TO THE UNITED STATES THE
SIGNING OF AN AGREEMENT WHICH WILL PLACE ALL REMAINING AMERICAN
PERSONNEL AND FACILITIES UNDER COMPLETE THAI JURISDICTION,
INFORMED SOURCES TOLD THE NATION YESTERDAY. PARA THE PROPOSAL,
INITIATED BY THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, WAS RELAYED TO THE UNITED
STATES EMBASSY HERE ON FEB. 4. THE NOTE CALLS FOR A NEW ROUND
OF NEGOTIATIONS "IN DETAIL" ON THE EXACT NUMBER OF U.S. PERSONNEL
AND FACILITIES TO BE LEFT BEHIND FOLLOWING THE MARCH 20 DEADLINE
FOR A "TOTAL WITHDRAWAL" OF AMERICAN COMBAT UNITS FROM THAILAND.
PARA DESPITE THE FOREIGN MINISTRY'S SUGGESTION TO KICK OFF THE
NEGOTIATIONS BEFORE MARCH 20, THE U.S. GOVERNMENT HAS SO FAR
FAILED TO PROVIDE AN OFFICIAL RESPONSE. PARA THE UNPRECEDENTED
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PROPOSAL INCLUDES PLACING ALL AMERICAN MILITARY FACILITIES,

PERSONNEL UNDER THAI JURISDICTION AND ALL REMAINING AMERICAN MILITARY FACILITIES, INCLUDING THE HIGHLY SECRETIVE INTELLIGENCE MONITORING APPARATUS, UNDER DIRECT THAI CONTROL. PARA THE THAI PROPOSAL ALSO ENVISAGES PUTTING ALL PERSONNEL ATTACHED TO THE HITHERTO LITTLE-KNOWN NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY (NSA), OPERATING THREE INTELLIGENCE MONITORING UNITS IN THAILAND, UNDER STRICT CONTROL OF THE THAI GOVERNMENT. PARA THERE HAVE BEEN SUGGESTIONS IN THE CABINET-APPOINTED COMMITTEE REVIEWING THAI- AMERICAN RELATIONS, HEADED BY FOREIGN AFFAIRS UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE ANAN PANYARACHUN, THAT THE NSA OPERATIVES SHOULD BE HENCEFORTH TREATED LIKE ALL OTHER FOREIGN TECHNICIANS IN THAILAND. PARA ANOTHER PROPOSED PROVISION IN THE NEW AGREEMENT WOULD PROHIBIT THE UNITED STATES FROM USING THAI SOIL TO INTERVENE IN THE DOMESTIC AFFAIRS OF THAILAND'S NEIGHBORS. PARA AS THE THAI OFFICIALS SEE IT, THE PROPOSED AGREEMENT WOULD BE VALID FOR TWO YEARS, RENEWABLE ONLY WHEN THE THAI GOVERNMENT CONSIDERS IT BENEFICIAL TO THAILAND. PARE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR TO THAILAND, MR. CHARLES WHITEHOUSE, DURING A MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER CHATICHAI CHUNHAWAN EARLIER THIS MONTH WHEN THE THAI MESSAGE WAS HANDED OVER, WAS SAID TO HAVE QUESTIONED THE NECESSITY FOR A NEW AGREEMENT IN VIEW OF THE EXISTENCE OF OLD "AGREEMENTS." PARA INFORMED SOURCES SAID THE AMERICAN ENVOY ALSO POINTED OUT THAT IT WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE FOR HIS GOVERNMENT TO REPLY TO THE THAI PROPOSAL BEFORE MARCH 20 BECAUSE OF THE EXTREME SIGNIFICANCE OF THE THAI SUGGESTION. PARA TAKING A TOUGH LINE, THE THAI FOREIGN MINISTRY WAS SAID TO HAVE INFORMED THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR THAT THAILAND VIEWED THE PROPOSED AGREEMENT AS A VERY IMPORTANT DOCUMENT, THE PRINCIPLE OF WHICH WOULD HAVE TO BE AGREED UPON BY BOTH GOVERNMENTS BEFORE DETAILS OF THE CONTINUED PRESENCE OF AMERICAN MILITARY PERSONNEL COULD BE DISCUSSED. PARA AMERICAN AUTHORITIES, ACCORDING TO THE SOURCES, ATTACH GREAT IMPORTANCE -- AND SENSITIVENESS -- TO ITS NSA FACILITIES IN THAILAND BECAUSE THEY INCLUDE REDAR STATIONS, HIGH-POWERED ELECTRONIC MONITORING AND COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT, MOST OF WHICH ARE LOCATED AT THE RAMASUN CAMP IN UDORN THANI. PARA DISMANTLING OF SUCH FACILITIES -- OR ALLOWING THEM TO BE PUT UNDER DIRECT THAI CONTROL -- WOULD CREATE A BIG GAP OR TREMENDOUSLY REDUCE THE CAPABILITY OF THE U.S. GLOBAL MILITARY COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM. UNCLASSIFIED

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PARA THE U.S. IS ALSO KNOWN TO HAVE INFORMED THE THAI GOVERNMENT OF ITS INTENTION TO KEEP UTAPAO OPEN FOR AMERICAN OPERATIONS, PARTICULARLY FOR RECONNAISSANCE FLIGHTS TO DIEGO GARCIA. PARA THE ISSUE OVER NSA FACILITIES IN THAILAND WAS REPORTEDLY DISCUSSED BETWEEN MAJ. GEN. CHATICHAI AND U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE HENRY KISSINGER WHEN THE THAI FOREIGN MINISTER VISITED WASHINGTON LATE IN NOVEMBER LAST YEAR. PARA MR. KISSINGER WAS BELIEVED TO HAVE TOLD GEN. CHATICHAI THAT THE U.S. WAS

WILLING TO HAND OVER ITS MONITORING AND COMMUNICATIONS
EQUIPMENT TO THAILAND -- BUT DETAILS WOULD BE DISCUSSED AT A
LATER DATE IN BANGKOK. SO FAR, NO NEGOTIATIONS ON THE ISSUE
HAVE BEEN HELD. PARA THE RAMASUN CAMP. ACCORDING TO INFORMED
SOURCES, HAS ENJOYED A "PRIVILEGED STATUS" COMPARED WITH OTHER
BASES USED BY THE AMERICANS SO FAR. THE THAI SUPREME COMMAND,
THE SOURCES SAID, HAD ENTERED INTO A "RADIO FIELD RESEARCH
AGREEMENT" WITH THE PENTAGON PERMITTING AMERICAN AUTHORITIES
TO HAVE COMPLETE, BOTH IN THEORY AND PRACTICE, CONTROL OVER
THE STATION UNTIL SUCH TIME AS THE PENTAGON DEEMS IT
APPROPRIATE TO HAND THE FACILITIES OVER TO THAILAND. PARA
AT LEAST IN THEORY, ALL BASES SO FAR USED BY AMERICANS HAVE
HAD A THAI COMMANDER SUPERVISING MILITARY ACTIVITIES.
RAMASUN CAMP HAS HOWEVER BEEN AN EXCEPTION IN THIS CASE.
PARA "THIS NEW PROPOSED AGREEMENT FROM THAILAND WILL REPLACE
ALL OTHER AGREEMENTS OR UNDERSTANDINGS THAILAND HAS HAD WITH
THE UNITED STATE," SAID A HIGH-RANKING FOREIGN MINISTRY
OFFICIAL. PARA HE ADDED: "I WON'T DISCUSS THE NUMBER OF

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 L-03 H-02

PA-02 PRS-01 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 ACDA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8699
INFO USIA WASHDC
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI
13 AF CC
COMUSMACTHAI BANGKOK TH
13 AF CV UTAPAO

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BASES OR MILITARY PERSONNEL THAILAND WILL NEGOTIATE WITH
THE UNITED STATES. BUT THE PRINCIPLE IS THAT ALL BASES AND
STATIONS WILL COME UNDER THAI JURISDICTION. UTAPAO, TOO, WILL

HAVE TO GO COME MARCH 20. ANY CONTINUED AMERICAN PRESENCE WILL HAVE TO BENEFIT THAILAND." PARA THE THAI PROPOSAL WAS SUBMITTED TO THE U.S. EMBASSY SOON AFTER THE U.S. CONGRESSIONAL FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE DECIDED TO SLASH PROPOSED AMERICAN MILITARY "GRANTS" TO THAILAND FROM 572 TO 200 MILLION BAHT, REPRESENTING A MAJOR CUT OF MORE THAN 50 PERCENT. PARA THAI OFFICIALS HAVE ALSO DISMISSED AN AMERICAN CLAIM, BEING CIRCULATED IN BANGKOK, THAT THE THAI GOVERNMENT HAD AGREED IN PRINCIPLE TO ALLOW ABOUT 3,000 U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL TO REMAIN IN THAILAND AFTER MARCH 20. PARA "UNTIL AND UNLESS THE U.S. EMBASSY GIVES US A REPLY TO OUR PROPOSED NEW AGREEMENT, NO DECISION WILL BE MADE ON THE SIZE OF REMAINING AMERICAN PRESENCE IN THAILAND," ANOTHER HIGH-RANKING OFFICIAL STRESSED YESTERDAY. END TEXT.

3. SAME ISSUE OF THE NATION CARRIED FOLLOWING EDITORIAL:

4. BEGIN TEXT. EVERYONE, WHO HAS FOLLOWED THE LONG AMERICAN UNCLASSIFIED

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MILITARY PRESENCE HERE, SHOULD BE AWARE OF THE FACT THAT THERE ARE SO MANY RAMIFICATIONS THAT IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR THEM TO FOLD THEIR TENTS AND VANISH IN DOUBLE-QUICK TIME. TRUE, THEIR WARPLANES, THEIR AIR FORCE PERSONNEL, AND SUCH OTHER COMBAT TROOPS THAT THEY MAY HAVE ON THAI SOIL HAVE BECOME USELESS BOTH TO THE UNITED STATES AND TO THAILAND. ACTUALLY, IT IS MORE OF A MILLSTONE AROUND OUR NECK BECAUSE IT HAS BECOME A HOT ISSUE WITH OUR COMMUNIST NEIGHBORS. PARA WE ARE SURE THAT THE LAST U.S. COMBAT PLANE AND THOSE MILITARY PERSONNEL WHO HAVE BEEN CONNECTED WITH THE INDOCHINA WAR WILL FLY OUT OF THAILAND ON OR BEFORE THE MARCH 20 DEADLINE. BOTH COUNTRIES HAVE ACCEPTED THAT JUSMAG OR USMACHTAI WILL REMAIN TO MONITOR AND ADVISE ON U.S. MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO THAILAND. BUT THE DETAILS ARE NOT KNOWN AND THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT OUR FOREIGN MINISTRY IS TRYING TO FIND OUT SO THAT IT CAN BE PUT ON PAPER. PARA WE STRONGLY BACK THE DEMAND OF OUR FOREIGN MINISTRY THAT ALL PAST AGREEMENTS -- ALMOST NONE EXIST BECAUSE THEY ARE EITHER VERBAL AGREEMENTS OR EXCHANGE OF LETTERS AT ONE LEVEL OR ANOTHER -- BE REVIEWED SO THAT A NEW AGREEMENT CAN BE REACHED AND A DOCUMENT PROPERLY DRAWN UP AND SIGNED BY BOTH PARTIES SO THAT EVERYONE WILL KNOW WHERE THEY STAND. PARA IT IS ESSENTIAL FOR THAILAND TO KNOW WHAT THE AMERICANS PROPOSE TO DO WITH THEIR PARAMILITARY FACILITIES. WE WILL MENTION ONLY TWO -- THE RAMASUN CAMP WHICH IS PART OF THE AMERICAN GLOBAL COMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES AND, SECOND, THE POSSIBILITY OF USING THE UTAPAO AIRBASE FOR RECONNAISSANCE OVER THE INDIAN OCEAN AND FLIGHTS TO DIEGO GARCIA. PARA THE THAI INQUIRY IS QUITE SIMPLE AND IT IS NECESSARY FOR THE FOREIGN MINISTRY TO KNOW ABOUT ALL DETAILS BEFORE THE MARCH 20 PULLOUT. IT IS ALSO JUST AND RIGHT THAT THAILAND DEMANDS

THAT THOSE FACILITIES LEFT BEHIND AND OPERATED BY AMERICANS
COME UNDER THAI COMMAND. IT IS TRUE THAT THE FICTION HAS
BEEN MAINTAINED UP THE NEW THAT IN ALL AMERICAN AIR BASES,
THERE WAS A THAI OFFICER WHO WAS IN COMMAND -- BUT THAT WAS
ONLY NOMINAL AND A FACE-SAVING MANEUVER. NOW WHAT THAILAND
WANTS IS THAT A THAI BE EFFECTIVELY IN COMMAND. PARA ALL
THIS WAS PUT BEFORE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR CHARLES WHITEHOUSE
AS EARLY AS FEB. 4 THIS YEAR, BUT HE HAS PREVARICATED AND
SAID THAT IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO MEET THE FOREIGN
MINISTRY DEMANDS BEFORE MARCH 20. SO FAR AS WE CAN SEE,
THERE SHOULD BE NO DIFFICULTY AT ALL IN STATING THE
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AMERICAN SIDE OF THE CASE BEFORE THE DEADLINE. PARA THERE
IS HOWEVER ONE IMPORTANT REASON THAT MAY MAKE THE AMERICANS
PLAY FOR TIME. THEY KNOW VERY WELL THAT THEY ARE DEALING
WITH A CARETAKER GOVERNMENT AND THEY MAY BE WORRIED ABOUT
PUTTING ALL THE CARDS ON THE TABLE WITHOUT KNOWING, AS WE
OURSELVES DON'T, WHO WILL FORM THE NEXT GOVERNMENT AND WITH
WHOM THEY WILL BE DEALING. PARA BUT AS PRIME MINISTER
KHUKRIT PRAMOJ HAS SHOWN WHEN HE OUSTED DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
TAVICH KLINPRATHUM, THIS IS AN EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT AND AS
SUCH THE AMERICANS MAY FIND IT EASIER TO DEAL WITH THIS
GOVERNMENT THAN WITH WHATEVER GOVERNMENT MAY TAKE POWER
AFTER THE ELECTIONS. PARA WITH THEIR CREDIBILITY AT STAKE,
THIS IS NOT THE TIME FOR THE AMERICANS TO PLAY IT CAGEY.
END TEXT
WHITEHOUSE

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